

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
TO USIA WASHDC
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UNCLAS WELLINGTON 1379

USIAC

E.O. 11652: N/A
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION

FOR: IOP, IPS, IBS

1. THE CHRISTCHURCH PRESS, THE SOUTH ISLAND'S LARGEST DAILY NEWSPAPER (CIRC 74,000), UNDER THE HEADING "RECOGNISING THE PRG IN SAIGON", COMMENTED ON MAY 14:

2. "NEW ZEALAND HAS FOLLOWED AUSTRALIA, JAPAN, FRANCE AND MALAYSIA IN ITS RECOGNITION OF THE PROVISIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH VIETNAM. THE GOVERNMENT WAITED UNTIL IT BECAME QUITE CLEAR WHO WAS IN CONTROL IN SAIGON: IN DOING SO IT SHOWED THE SAME REASONED APPROACH WHICH MARKED ITS HANDLING OF THE PROBLEM OF REFUGEE ORPHANS FROM SOUTH VIETNAM. RECOGNITION DOES NOT IMPLY APPROVAL AND FEWER THAN HALF OF THE 500 DELEGATES AT THE LABOUR PARTY'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON MONDAY NIGHT CHEERED MR. ROWLING'S ANNOUNCEMENT. NOR DOES RECOGNITION MEAN AN IMMEDIATE RESUMPTION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS." "AN EARLY EXCHANGE OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS WOULD NOT NECESSARILY SERVE NEW ZEALAND'S INTERESTS, EVEN IF THE REGIME IN SAIGON AGREED TO THE EXCHANGE. AT MOST, A DIPLOMATIC POST MIGHT GIVE NEW ZEALAND AN OPPORTUNITY TO ASSESS HOW BEST TO APPLY THE

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AID PROMISED TO SOUTH VIETNAM: BUT IT WILL NOT MEAN THAT

NEW ZEALAND CAN EXPECT TO HAVE ANY CONTROL OVER THE DIS-
POSITION OF THAT AID."

3. "FORMAL RECOGNITION OF THE GOVERNMENT IN SAIGON AT LEAST
ALLOWS NEW ZEALAND TO ADD A VERY SMALL VOICE TO THE PLEAS
FROM OTHER COUNTRIES THAT THE KILLING IN SOUTH VIETNAM
SHOULD STOP AND THAT REVENGE SHOULD NOT BE A PRINCIPAL
OBJECT OF THE NEW REGIME. NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIA ARE
NOT LIKELY TO BE LISTENED TO; THEY ARE ON THE SHORT LIST
OF "LACKEYS OF THE UNITED STATES" - THE COUNTRIES WHICH
ATTEMPTED TO HELP SOUTH VIETNAM DEFEND ITSELF FROM
INVASION. SAIGON'S NEW MASTERS, IN THE EUPHORIA OF
VICTORY, HAVE NO SPECIAL REASON TO BE AGREEABLE TO RECENT
ENEMIES. APART FROM SUCH SENTIMENTS, THE IDEA OF
DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGES MAY HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL THE NEW REGIME
HAS BEEN CONFIRMED IN OFFICE BY THE PROMISED ELECTIONS.

4. "IN RECOGNISING THE P.R.G. THE NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT HAS
INDICATED AGAIN THAT THE MANNER IN WHICH A GOVERNMENT HAS
BEEN ESTABLISHED IS NO BAR TO ITS RECOGNITION. THE
PRINCIPLE WAS ENDORSED LAST YEAR BY THE FORMER PRIME
MINISTER (MR. KIRK), AT WHOSE BEHEST NEW ZEALAND FINALLY
RECOGNISED THE RUSSIAN CONQUEST OF ESTONIA, LATVIA, AND
LITHUANIA 35 YEARS AGO AND THEIR SUBSEQUENT FORMAL
INCORPORATION INTO THE SOVIET UNION. THE ATTITUDE IS
USUALLY SENSIBLE, IF CYNICAL, ESPECIALLY FOR SUCH A
COUNTRY AS NEW ZEALAND, WHICH DEPENDS ON FOREIGN TRADE
AND CANNOT AFFORD THE LUXURY OF BESTOWING POLITICAL
PRAISE AND BLAME THROUGH DIPLOMATIC POSTURING."
HOULAHAN

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